

Testimony by Mr. Todd Ambs  
Water Division Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
on behalf of the  
Council of Great Lakes Governors  
before the  
U.S. Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure,  
Subcommittee on Water Resources & Environment

September 13, 2006

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our shared efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. My name is Todd Ambs and I am the Water Division Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. I am testifying today on behalf of the Council of Great Lakes Governors.

As President Bush noted in his 2004 Executive Order, the Great Lakes are a national treasure. Because of their size, human population, the fact that they are boundary waters shared with Canada and the interstate implications of fish and wildlife populations, management of these resources requires the three C's of collaboration, cooperation and coordination. I am pleased to report today that we have achieved success in the planning phases by fully following these three C's.

Some statistics reflect the complexity and significance of the region while illustrating an essential fact--the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes is of vital national interest to the United States.

The Great Lakes constitute the largest surface freshwater system in the world. More than 35 million Americans receive the benefits of drinking water, food, a place to work and live, and transportation from the Great Lakes.

Our national economy depends on the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes States account for 30 percent of the total US Gross Domestic Product. The Great Lakes are a key national transportation network. U.S.-flag vessels annually ship over 125 million tons of cargo between Great Lakes ports. Fishing, boating, hunting and wildlife-watching generate almost \$53 billion in annual revenues in the Great Lakes region. One-third of all the boats registered in the United States are in the Great Lakes States and boating alone supports over 250,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, and despite significant and ongoing investments by all levels of government, the Great Lakes remain degraded and continue to be threatened. And, these threats promise to increase in the future.

The magnitude of the institutional challenges alone is daunting. To succeed in developing joint efforts, we first had to find a method of engaging eight States, multiple tribal governments, thousands of local governments and multitudes of interest groups. In some instances, we also needed to work closely with the two Great Lakes Canadian Provinces and the Canadian federal government. Despite these institutional challenges, and as a result of a lot of hard work, we now have two regionally developed blueprints for action to address threats to the Great Lakes. The two blueprints are:

1. The Great Lake-St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement (the Agreement), developed by the Great Lakes Governors in partnership with the Premiers of Ontario and Québec, and the companion Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (the Compact) that is the mechanism the Governors will use to fulfill the promises in the ten-party Agreement; and,
2. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes.

Both of these plans for action are landmark achievements for large-scale resource management. Because of geographic scale, population, environmental complexities and the number of different jurisdictions, both efforts required the strong commitment of the Governors to fully engage all interests and attempt something that had never been done before at this kind of scale. Large collaborative efforts like these are not without risks. Yet, leadership and sincere interest in collaborative approaches promoted the positive atmosphere that led to the successful conclusions noted above.

I would first like to talk about the Agreement and the Compact. The history behind the Agreement and Compact is long, dating back to the Great Lakes Charter in 1985. When events not anticipated by the Charter occurred, specifically the proposal to export water in bulk from Lake Superior to Asia, the Governors and the U.S. Congress responded immediately to develop new approaches that would protect the lakes and preserve the related aquatic systems.

To fulfill their stewardship responsibilities, the Governors, through the Council of Great Lakes Governors, initiated a dialogue with the Premiers of Ontario and Québec which resulted in the Charter Annex Agreement of 2001 (the Annex) being signed by all ten Great Lakes Governors and Premiers. The Annex specified the intent of the ten jurisdictional leaders to create a new water management accord through an open public process within three years. Even though numerous new Governors and Premiers joined the discussions during that period, the regional commitment remained unchanged. A first draft water management plan was released in 2004 with a second draft released in 2005. After two rounds of public meetings and thousands of responses to issues of concern, the final Agreement and Compact were approved on December 13, 2005. This Agreement, the first of its kind in the world, demonstrates that the leaders of the waterbelt are serious about their stewardship role and committed to the need for shared goals, objectives and common protocols for water project reviews and decisions. This Agreement also provides unprecedented protections for the Great Lakes by banning water diversions with limited exceptions, encouraging water conservation and efficiency, and promoting the sustainable use of our water resources.

Now the action will shift to each Statehouse in the region, as the legislatures take the actions needed to enact the Compact. Legislation has already been introduced in Illinois, Ohio and New York, and passed the New York General Assembly. Other States will follow suit. After each State has passed enacting legislation, our attention will turn to Congress. We will ask that Congress provide its consent to the Compact, which will make the Compact a fully enforceable agreement among the States.

I would next like to talk about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. The Strategy is the result of many years of hard work by the Great Lakes Governors and our partners in the Collaboration. The process began when, at the request of the Great Lakes Congressional delegation, the Great Lakes Governors developed priorities for restoration and protection:

- Promoting the sustainable use of water resources;
- Protecting human health;
- Controlling pollution from diffuse sources;
- Reducing persistent bio-accumulative toxics;
- Stopping the introduction and spread of non-native aquatic invasive species;
- Protecting coastal wetland and wildlife habitats;
- Restoring Areas of Concern;
- Improving information collection and dissemination; and,
- Adopting practices that protect the environment along with the recreational and commercial value of the Great Lakes.

In 2004, President Bush issued his Executive Order. This action led to the launch of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. The goal of this Collaboration was to develop a strategy to protect and restore the Great Lakes. The Collaboration used the Governors' priorities as its organizing principle.

Over approximately one year, the Great Lakes Governors joined with representatives of the Administration, Congress, Mayors and Tribes to develop the Great Lakes Protection and Restoration Strategy. Over 1500 representatives of a wide cross-section of governmental and non-governmental stakeholder groups participated in creating this Strategy, resulting in its broad-based support.

We now have priorities that we all agree on and we have a broadly-supported Strategy to realize them. Through the Strategy, the region is now speaking with one voice. What is needed now is the will to act, the means to act and the leadership to guide those actions if we are to realize our vision and reach our goals.

The Great Lakes Governors are already committing significant resources to the protection of our Great Lakes. As you may know, the 2003 report by the Government Accountability Office documented the fact that State and local spending on Great Lakes programs far exceeds the investment by the federal government.

Unfortunately, significant challenges remain to achieving our broader objectives. Funding is a consistent obstacle and we recognize that securing investments of the magnitude called for in the Strategy challenges all of us at all levels of government. Nevertheless, the Governors are committed to continuing to work with our region's Mayors, Members of Congress, Tribal leaders and others toward our shared goal of securing large-scale, long-term and stable federal funding to implement the Strategy's recommendations. We are seeking federal funding as a supplement to the State, local and Tribal investment already taking place. While we remain committed to doing our share, we cannot accomplish many urgently needed restoration goals without more federal participation. As the Strategy's recommendations illustrate, some needs can only be addressed through the commitment of large-scale, long-term funding.

We are encouraged by the recent Senate proposals to increase funding authorization for federal, State and Tribal fish and wildlife projects. We also support the recent Senate proposal to institutionalize the organization of the Regional Collaboration process, and

the related federal Interagency Task Force, to maintain the means for working together and for assessing programs and delivery systems to gain efficiencies.

Along with new funding, we also seek improvements to the system by which funds are distributed. Too frequently, Congressional expectations are not achieved. One reason for this is that available funds for addressing a threat are diminished significantly by multiple transaction costs as funds move through agencies towards real implementation. In addition, there are numerous competing programs that often work at cross-purposes. To reduce these overhead “losses,” we encourage Congress to assess the viability of block grant approaches for any new funds which can be committed to support the recommendations of the regional collaboration strategy.

Together with the Mayors, we previously identified FY2007 funding and other near-term actions (attached) that we believe are necessary to jumpstart the implementation of the Strategy. An increase of \$300 million from FY2006 will leverage other monies, bring significant returns and lead to measurable progress. We again ask that Congress seriously consider this request in light of the significant benefits that these investments will mean for the region and the nation. The following is a summary of the Great Lakes Governors’ and Mayors’ top recommendations:

Passage of a strong, effective bill to control nuisance aquatic invasive species and prevent the Asian Carp from entering the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Governors have urged Congress to quickly reauthorize and fund the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act. Great Lakes stakeholders echo that request, and further emphasize the need for a strong bill, such as S. 770, H.R. 1591 and H.R. 1592, which include provisions that address the specific challenges faced by the Great Lakes. We applaud the recent bill that authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to use existing funds to maintain and operate the current temporary Asian Carp dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. However, there remains a need for stable, long-term federal funding for the operation and maintenance of both the temporary dispersal barrier and the permanent barrier that is still under construction. The Great Lakes Governors

have already contributed monies to overcome federal funding shortfalls, in addition to the significant amounts committed by the State of Illinois. The federal government must now do its part to ensure that the Great Lakes remain protected from Asian carp.

Increased federal funding for wastewater infrastructure to improve water quality and reduce beach closings. The need is great when it comes to sewers and related infrastructure. As you may recall, U.S. EPA's gap analysis showed a \$525 billion shortfall between current levels of spending and the projected need for water infrastructure investment over the next 20 years. Clearly, this need cannot be met without the increased participation of the federal government.

One of the major threats to human health across the nation, as well as in the Great Lakes and their tributaries, comes from combined sewer overflows (CSOs), which discharge untreated sewage during heavy rainfalls. Costly as they are, CSOs are only one of the water infrastructure challenges faced by local communities. From aging wastewater treatment plants to failing on-lot septic systems, the most advanced nation in the world is struggling to manage its sewage. America deserves better than unsanitary conditions that harken back to the disease-ridden days of long ago. Increased funding for the State Revolving Loan Funds that finance wastewater projects would be a good step toward meeting our infrastructure needs. Unfortunately, these funds have been cut in recent years and, again this year, the President's budget calls for further cuts. We hope to work with you to reverse this trend.

Appropriate funding for the Legacy Act to clean up toxic sediments. The Great Lakes Governors commend President Bush for his inclusion of a \$49.6 million request in Great Lakes Legacy Act funding. The Great Lakes Governors support the President and urge Congress to appropriate these funds.

The Legacy Act specifically addresses residual contaminants in the Areas of Concern where contaminated sediments perpetuate problems such as fish deformities and

limitations on fish consumption. Legacy Act spending can make a very positive difference.

Restore 200,000 acres of wetlands. We applaud the President's commitment to begin work to restore 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin. To meet that goal, we ask that \$28.5 million be appropriated to begin restoration work immediately. The States remain committed to working with other non-federal partners to provide an additional \$28.5 million to complement the cost-share toward this end. And, to ensure that we efficiently use the resources we are given, we ask that you join us in encouraging the Great Lakes Federal Interagency Task Force to review all federal agencies' wetland management programs to develop a consolidated wetlands restoration and protection approach.

Encourage sustainable development through the remediation of waterfront brownfields. The philosophy of sustainability overlays all the recommendations in the Strategy. To promote this ethic of sustainable development, we continue to urge that Congress direct USEPA to apportion \$50 million in their brownfield grant program to remediate waterfront brownfields. The remediation of these brownfields and their reintegration into the region's economy will serve as a model of sustainable development.

In closing, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, our pledge to you is that we will continue to work with you to ensure that the investments we ask Congress to make in the Great Lakes are put to good use. We must restore this ecological treasure. That will be our legacy for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



March 10, 2006

The Honorable George V. Voinovich  
Hart Building 524  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Senator Voinovich:

Thank you for your leadership in our shared efforts to restore and protect the Great Lakes. This objective is of vital national interest to the United States. The Great Lakes are a national treasure constituting the largest surface freshwater system in the world. More than 35 million Americans receive the benefits of drinking water, food, a place to work and live, recreational opportunities and transportation from the Great Lakes. Our national economy depends on the Great Lakes. Nearly 29% of our nation's gross domestic product (GDP) is produced by the Great Lakes States, which includes approximately 60% of all U.S. manufacturing.

Unfortunately, there are threats to the Great Lakes Basin now and they promise to increase in the future. As the result of a year-long process initiated by President Bush through an Executive Order, the Great Lakes Governors and Mayors recently joined with representatives of the Administration, Congress, and Tribes to unveil a Strategy to restore and protect the Great Lakes. Over 1500 governmental and non-governmental stakeholders worked together to create this Strategy, resulting in its broad-based support. The Governors' and Mayors' goal is now to secure large-scale, long-term funding to implement the Strategy's recommendations and to enact management reforms to ensure that resources are efficiently used to address our highest-priority needs.

As the President noted in his Executive Order, "...over 140 Federal programs help fund and implement environmental restoration and management activities throughout the Great Lakes system." But, too frequently and despite best efforts, these Federal programs are poorly coordinated and inadequately focused on agreed-upon priorities. The Executive Order sought to improve coordination by creating the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force. Although further progress is needed, we support Congressional action to codify the Executive Order and institutionalize the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force. More generally, we support a sustained, outcome-oriented collaborative process to more effectively consolidate Federal resources.

In addition, we believe that alternative resource delivery mechanisms should be pursued over the long term to ensure the greatest return on our investments. An annual appropriation toward this end should be directed to support Great Lakes restoration and protection efforts as envisioned under S 508, “The Great Lakes Environmental Restoration Act,” and HR 792, “Great Lakes Restoration Act of 2005.” Furthermore, spending priorities should be determined at the State and local level using the Strategy as a guide. We applaud the bills’ sponsors and cosponsors and join their call to provide long-term, large scale funding through a reformed process.

As we work together to implement these long-term reforms, we also recognize that specific actions can and must be taken in the interim to advance the Strategy. Therefore, on December 12, 2005, we asked the President to support a series of broadly-supported near-term actions to protect and restore the Great Lakes. A copy of the letter is attached. These proposed actions were developed in consultation with members of Congress and Tribal representatives. All of the near-term action items contained in our letter to the President are of vital importance. Action is needed now to finally achieve significant improvements on these well documented and widely supported recommendations. Some of these requested actions have been stalled in debate for far too long:

- Authorizing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete and operate two permanent dispersal barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal; and, appropriating \$6 million to implement this action in order to prevent the Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes. This investment is a fraction of the value of the Great Lakes fishery.
- Achieving broader protection against the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species through congressional passage of the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act, as reflected in SB 770 and HR 1591 and HR 1592.
- Supporting the President’s request for the Great Lakes Legacy Act to be funded at \$49.6 million– if not the full \$54 million authorized level.
- Supporting the President’s commitment to begin work to restore 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin by appropriating \$28.5 million to begin restoration work immediately. The States remain committed to working with other non-federal partners to provide an additional \$28.5 million cost-share toward this end. To ensure these resources are used efficiently, we also ask that you join us in encouraging the Great Lakes Federal Interagency Task Force to review all federal agencies’ wetland management programs to develop a consolidated wetlands restoration and protection approach.
- Appropriating \$50 million in additional funding for USEPA’s brownfield grant program. These funds should be used for remediation projects in shoreline communities.

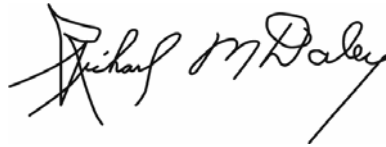
We also want to ensure that existing and proven core programs, such as the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund; the Coastal Zone Management Program; and, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Sea Lamprey control program are funded at fully authorized levels. Continuing programs like these is critical to maintaining the gains made through past investments.

The time for planning has ended and the time for action has begun. We look forward to working with you as we take that action. Should you or your staff have any questions, our staff contacts are David Naftzger, Executive Director of the Council of Great Lakes Governors at (312) 407-0177 and David Ullrich, Executive Director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative at (312) 201-4516.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Doyle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" being more prominent than the last name "Doyle".

The Honorable Jim Doyle  
Governor of Wisconsin  
Chair, Council of Great Lakes Governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Daley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent than the last name "Daley".

The Honorable Richard M. Daley  
Mayor, City of Chicago  
Chair, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence  
Cities Initiative

Attachment



December 12, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Bush:

Again, thank you for your continued leadership in our shared efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes. As a direct result of your Executive Order creating a federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and promoting a regional collaboration of national significance, we have made significant strides that could help to protect this national treasure.

We are pleased that, thanks to the dedicated efforts of more than 1500 stakeholders and experts from across the region, we now have a comprehensive assessment of Great Lakes restoration and protection needs. We also have a clear set of consensus recommendations for meeting these needs. And, the Collaboration's recommendations illustrate that some of these needs can only be addressed through new or additional resources at the federal, state, tribal or local levels.

As we stated in our November 1 letter, we share the goal of accomplishing greater results with existing resources. We also share the overwhelming view of our Collaboration partners that federal resources must be increased in the FY2007 budget to better restore and protect Great Lakes.

Please find attached a proposed list of near-term action items that, if implemented, could substantially improve our long-term ability to protect and restore the Great Lakes. This list has been developed by our region's Governors and Mayors in consultation with members of the Great Lakes Congressional Task Force and representatives of Great Lakes Tribes.

Serious problems continue to negatively impact the region's health and welfare. The ecological stability of these unique world class resources and the strength of this nation's economy cannot be resolved by maintaining the status quo. We must make additional

investments in the short term and build on these commitments over time. Above all, we agree that there will be an ongoing need to continue working together.

Your Executive Order has helped to bring us together as never before. We have renewed our region's optimism and believe that we can work together to overcome our shared challenges. We ask that you help us deliver on the promise of our shared efforts by partnering to support these near-term actions. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff to move these ideas into action.

We would ask that a meeting be scheduled among our staff and yours in order to develop a workplan toward our shared goals. Our staff contacts are David Naftzger, Executive Director of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, at (312) 407-0177 and David Ullrich, Executive Director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative at (312) 201-4516.

Sincerely,

The image shows three handwritten signatures in black ink. From left to right, they are: Jim Doyle, Bob Taft, and Richard M. Daley. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Governor Doyle  
Co-Chair  
Council of Great Lakes  
Governors

Governor Taft  
Co-Chair  
Council of Great Lakes  
Governors

Mayor Daley  
Chair  
Great Lakes and  
St. Lawrence Cities  
Initiative

## Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Near Term Action Items

### Invasive Species

Invasive species pose one of the most serious threats to the stability of the Great Lakes ecosystem. An average of one new species is discovered in the Great Lakes ecosystem every eight months, and once present, eradication is impossible. Prevention is vital to stemming ecosystem impacts from the introduction of new invasive species.

*Federal:* The federal government must move swiftly under its existing authorities to require improvement for ballast water management, including practices for those ships declaring no ballast on board, to forestall the introduction of new invasive species to the Great Lakes.

We ask that injurious carp species be listed under the Lacey Act.

Congress should pass and the President should sign the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act (Senate Bill 770/HR 1591 and 1592). Enactment of NAISA is one of the key legislative objectives of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. Passage of comprehensive federal legislation such as NAISA would address many of the key recommendations developed by the participants in the Collaboration, and is critical to our overall restoration goals. The bill should include:

- \$8 million for Great Lakes state-specific management plans. It is vital that these funds be distributed to the States and Tribes to implement existing plans approved by FWS.
- \$11.25 million to prevent introduction of AIS by vessels (includes \$6 million to USCG Sec 1101, \$2.5 million to EPA Sec 1101, \$2.75 million to Task Force Sec 1101).
- \$6 million to the US Army Corps of Engineers to complete and operate permanent dispersal barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.
- \$1 million for model regional, state, and local rapid response contingency strategies.

*State/Tribe/Local:* The States will continue to implement state-specific plans, approved under the Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act, to prevent and control invasive species. Tribes will also implement control measures within areas of their authority. States, Cities and Tribes will implement

educational and regulatory efforts relative to invasive species targeted to those entities whose activities are most likely to pose a risk of AIS introductions.

The States estimate that they are devoting more than \$3.5 million annually to the control and prevention of invasive species in the Great Lakes. Industry and municipalities in the Great Lakes basin spend roughly \$70 million annually on removing zebra mussels from water intakes.

### Coastal Health

Elimination of sewage overflows to the Great Lakes and their tributaries is a region-wide need and the most direct means of improving coastal health. Beach closures are one of the most obvious markers of degraded coastal conditions

*Federal:* CSOs and SSOs are the greatest impediment to improving coastal health. The federal government, in cooperation with the States, should ensure that all CSO/SSO communities have completed a long-term control plan (LTCP) within the next five years and are making adequate progress in implementing it.

The cost of correcting CSOs and SSOs is burdensome to local communities and to the ratepayers who support their wastewater infrastructure. We ask that Congress provide a total of \$50 million in the FFY 2007 budget to provide interest rate subsidies or other forms of assistance for CSO/SSO projects in the Great Lakes basin. The Council of Environmental Infrastructure Financing Authorities supports interest rate subsidies over direct grant funds.

The Collaboration asks that an additional \$2 million be provided under the Beach Act to enable Great Lakes States and Tribes to standardize, trial, and implement a risk-based approach to beach/coastal assessment. Beyond that, we seek to maintain current funding levels: \$1.75 million for the Great Lakes States and \$50,000 for eligible tribes.

*State/Tribe/Local:* We note that SRFs include a state match requirement, and that local governments will incur billions of dollars in costs to address CSOs and improve infrastructure.

### Areas of Concern

Passage of the Legacy Act provided for the first time a dedicated source of funding for remediation of contaminated sediments in the Areas of Concern. However, appropriations have never reached authorized levels.

*Federal:* The Collaboration asks that the FFY 2007 budget contain the authorized funding level of \$54 million, an increase of \$24 million over the current appropriation. Congress should reauthorize the Legacy Act and include in it the

provisions recommended by the Collaboration to make use of the Act's funding more efficient and effective.

Restoration of the AOCs is necessarily driven at the local level, through plans developed by States, Tribes, local officials, and concerned citizens. Unless this capacity is nurtured at the local level, progress on AOC restoration will be limited. While States and NGOs have continued to support Remedial Action Plan groups, federal support has dwindled, with negative effect. The Collaboration requests that \$10 million be appropriated to support state and local AOC/RAP programs in the Great Lakes States, an increase of \$8 million over the current appropriation. and that GLNPO receive \$1.7 million for program administration, of which \$1.2 million exceeds the current appropriation.

*State/Tribe/Local:* The Collaboration notes that all Legacy Act projects require a non-federal cost share, to which States and local governments often contribute. For example, Ohio is prepared to contribute \$7 million to the Ashtabula River project currently under consideration for Legacy Act funding.

The States will take the lead on the establishment of a State-Federal-Local-Tribal coordinating Committee.

### Toxic Pollutants

Progress in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes will only be achieved and maintained to the extent that the introduction of toxic pollutants is controlled. While certain persistent toxic substances (PTS) have been significantly reduced in the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem over the past 30 years, they continue to be present at levels that pose threats to human and wildlife health and warrant fish consumption advisories in all five lakes. More recently, researchers have documented the presence of additional chemicals of emerging concern that may also pose threats to the Great Lakes.

*Federal:* The federal government should restate its commitment to implement the Great Lakes Bi-national Toxics Strategy, and should evaluate its implementation schedule for opportunities to accelerate its efforts.

We ask that the FFY 2007 budget include an additional \$2 million to be distributed to the States to expand the toxics reduction program in the Great Lakes Initiative.

The Administration and Congress are asked to provide \$1 million in FFY 2007 in ongoing funds to support the continuation of tribal fish tissue contaminant analysis programs and related community education programs. Congress is asked to appropriate an additional \$100,000 in the FFY 2007 budget to facilitate tribal participation in the mercury stewardship program described below.

Emerging chemicals of concern are little understood, but pose a potentially serious threat to aquatic life and wildlife in the basin. The Collaboration asks that Congress provide \$100,000 for monitoring of these new chemical contaminants.

*State/Tribe/Local:* States, Tribes, and local governments recognize that much of the work to reduce toxic pollutant loading into the Great Lakes will necessarily occur at the local level. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative will work with tribes and others on toxic reduction efforts, including such things as household hazardous waste collections, pesticides and fertilizer use reduction, and mercury product and waste collections.

The Great Lakes States, Cities and Tribes will develop a basin-wide mercury product stewardship strategy, aimed at managing mercury wastes and reducing the use of mercury-containing products. The Great Lakes Pollution Prevention Roundtable will lead this effort.

States, Tribes and municipalities will identify garbage burning practices in their jurisdictions and through education and regulation seek to reduce the incidence of this practice, which is the primary source of dioxins and furans into the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The Collaboration recognizes the need to protect human health through consistent and easily accessible messages on fish consumption. The States and Tribes will improve their fish consumption advisory programs, particularly regarding sensitive populations such as tribal communities.

### Habitat and Species

Preservation of the diversity of species in the Great Lakes basin can be significantly advanced through protection and restoration of wetlands and restoration of the Great Lakes tributaries. These activities are also key to the full implementation of international agreements on management of migratory birds and of the Great Lake fisheries resources.

*Federal:* The Collaboration asks that the FFY 2007 budget provide \$28.5 million to existing Fish and Wildlife Service programs to restore 100,000 acres of wetlands, toward the Collaboration goal of eventual restoration of 550,000 acres. States, Tribes, local governments and NGOs would raise an additional \$28.5 million in non-federal matching funds.

To maximize the use of existing funding for wetlands protection and restoration, the Collaboration proposes that the Federal Interagency Task Force review all federal agencies' wetland management programs and develop a consolidated approach.

Because Great Lakes tributaries are key spawning and nursery areas for

Great Lakes fish populations, species recovery plans are dependent on protecting existing high quality tributaries and restoring other tributaries with the potential to support targeted species. These activities are site-specific, based on watershed hydrologic and physical habitat needs. The Collaboration has set a near-term protection and restoration goal of ten tributary streams. We ask that Congress pass the Great Lakes River Restoration Act and appropriate \$40 million in the FFY 2007 budget for Fish and Wildlife Service programs to be directed to key tributary stream restorations.

*State/Tribe/Local:* The Collaboration recognizes the importance of preserving existing wetlands, and recommends that each State review its existing wetland management programs to determine (1) their effectiveness in preserving existing high-quality wetlands in the basin and (2) the success of mitigation projects in the basin. States, Tribes, and local governments will continue to use existing authorities to preserve wetlands, in particular high quality wetlands in the near shore areas of the Great Lakes.

As noted above, States, Tribes, local governments and NGOs would raise an additional \$28.5 million in non-federal matching funds to achieve the target of restoring 100,000 acres of wetlands in FFY 2007 and an additional \$10 million in non-federal match for tributary restoration.

#### Nonpoint source pollution

Nonpoint source impacts vary greatly in frequency and severity across the Great Lakes. Impacts have been particularly severe in the coastal wetlands and tributaries that once buffered the Lakes from environmental damage.

*Federal:* Although there are existing programs to deal with sedimentation and nutrient enrichment, the current needs outstrip existing program capacity. The Collaboration asks that the FFY 2007 budget include an additional \$66 million to increase enrollment in buffer strip programs.

Urban streams are particularly vulnerable to nonpoint source pollution impacts. The Collaboration asks that Congress appropriate \$18 million in the FFY 2007 budget for hydrology improvement projects in urbanized areas where runoff from development and the associated impairments directly affect natural waterways and their confluence with the Great Lakes or connecting waters.

*State/Tribe/Local:* The States estimated their spending on nonpoint source pollution control programs at nearly \$1.4 million annually in 2004.

## Indicators and Information

Accountability demands that the Great Lakes restoration effort be able to determine baseline conditions and assess the results of restoration projects and investments. In addition, the capacity to assess trends is needed to observe long term change and detect the emergence of new issues (e.g. new exotic species).

*Federal:* The SOLEC process to develop indicators should be completed for a full suite of 80 indicators, with particular attention to the use of indicators that will measure the success of the measures recommended in this Strategy. The Collaboration asks that \$800,000 be provided in the FFY 2007 budget toward this end. A “top ten” list of indicators should be developed and reported to the public on an annual basis.

The Federal Interagency Task Force should review monitoring programs among its member agencies to ensure effective and efficient gathering and reporting of data, and should coordinate the States and Tribes to optimize the effectiveness of monitoring investments throughout the region.

*State/Tribe/Local:* The States estimate their annual spending on monitoring and analysis in the basin at \$525,000. They stand ready to review these programs with the federal government to eliminate duplication of effort and maximize the scope of the data gathering and reporting effort.

## Sustainability

The philosophy of sustainability overlays all the recommendations developed through the Collaboration process. The positive result of investment in restoration projects can only be maintained over time if sustainable practices become more widespread. Many of the recommendations in the Collaboration's Strategy reflect a sustainable approach.

*Federal:* In the near term, the Collaboration suggests that federal agencies and the States review their prioritization formulas for brownfield grant and loan programs and for SRF loan programs to determine whether projects that reflect sustainable practices or advance sustainable principles can be awarded a higher priority for funding and/or a more favorable interest rate. In addition, Congress should earmark \$50 million in USEPA's brownfield grant program for waterfront brownfields.

*State/Tribe/Local:* Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York have created environmental bond funds that provide hundreds of millions of dollars for brownfield restoration and other sustainable practices.

States, local governments and Tribes have many programs which promote sustainable practices. These activities should continue, and be supplemented over the long term by the sustainable development approach contemplated in the Strategy. For example, local governments should be encouraged to adopt plans for growth that incorporate sustainable practices.

### Tribal Overarching Issues

There are 35 federally-recognized Indian Tribal Nations whose reservations are located in the Great Lakes Basin and/or who may retain treaty guaranteed rights to hunt, fish or gather within the Great Lakes Basin in areas ceded to the United States in various treaties. Tribal communities rely upon healthy, fully-functioning Great Lakes ecosystems to meet subsistence, economic, cultural, spiritual and medicinal needs.

The Tribes count upon the United States to honor its treaty obligations and trust responsibilities to adequately fund tribal natural resource and environmental management programs. Tribal environment and natural resource management programs are particularly vulnerable to budgetary reductions. The loss of what might be considered a small amount of funding to others usually constitutes a large percentage of a particular tribal program and results in a correspondingly large reduction in services to tribal communities, if not *de facto* elimination of the program involved.

The Collaboration asks the Administration and Congress to maintain base funding levels for tribal programs to ensure that the Tribes are able to provide for the health and welfare of their communities as well as to remain effective partners in Great Lakes protection and restoration efforts. Such funding should ensure tribal capacity to undertake research and monitoring that takes into account the consumption patterns and risk exposures of tribal members who engage in subsistence life ways, who use natural resources for medicine and in ceremonies, and whose livelihood is based upon natural resources.

Collaboration member Tribes also have identified the prevention and control of invasive species, the reduction and prevention of toxic pollutants (particularly mercury), and habitat protection and restoration as both near term and long term priorities.